

EC agrees on single currency by 1999

MAASTRICHT (R) — The European Community (EC) reached a single currency by the end of the century. Sweeping aside Bruxelles's strict economic criteria could launch a joint currency as early as 1997, and as late as 2000. French presidential spokesman Jean Mustelli told reporters: "The decision means the world's biggest trading bloc will have a single currency unit, underpinning its single market of 340 million consumers." European Economics Commissioner Hennig Christian Thyssen said: "I think it will be a big step toward the completion of the European Community." But the summit, overshadowed by the accelerating break-up of the Soviet Union, still had to overcome huge obstacles in speedily taking political union to give the EC world power commensurate with its economic weight. Germany says it will only sacrifice the powerful Deutschemark in exchange for a major stride towards European political integration.

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3 killed in helicopter crash

AMMAN (Petra) — Three air force officers died when a Royal Jordanian Air Force helicopter crashed Monday during night flying exercises, the Royal Jordanian Air Force announced Monday. The dead were identified as Captain Taysir Saleh Al Zind, Lieutenant Sadek Mohammad Abu Haq and Lt. Muzah Hassan Freihat. No further details were immediately available.

Arab League delays Lockerbie meeting

CAIRO (R) — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid said the 21-member body postponed a scheduled meeting Monday to discuss the Lockerbie bombing. Dr. Abdul Meguid told reporters Egypt, which has been mediating between Libya and the West, requested the delay "to allow more time for consultation." Monday's session was expected to discuss British criticism of the league's support for Libya following a meeting last week of the permanent representatives.

Syria expels Nazi hunter

PARIS (R) — Nazi hunter Beate Klarsfeld was expelled from Syria Monday after being arrested while protesting the government's alleged harbouring of a Nazi war criminal, the French Foreign Ministry said. Mrs. Klarsfeld was arrested in Damascus after demonstrating in front of the Syrian Interior Ministry against the reported presence in Syria of Alois Brunner, former chief of transit Camp in Drancy, France, was convicted in absentia for "crimes against humanity" for his role in deporting 120,000 people during World War II.

Maxwell autopsy finds no positive death cause

MADRID (R) — Pathologists who carried out the autopsy on publisher Robert Maxwell's body were unable to find conclusive proof of what caused his death last month, a knowledgeable source said Monday. The final autopsy report says Mr. Maxwell, who had coronary artery disease, most likely fell overboard after suffering a heart attack on the deck of his yacht, according to the source. Neither suicide nor drowning could be ruled out, said the source. The document is now in the hands of an investigating magistrate in the Canary Islands. The autopsy results only suggest a cause of death, the source said. "Can it be assumed that's what it is? No ... it's the most probable hypothesis."

Turkish troops kill two Kurds

ANKARA (R) — Turkish troops killed two Kurdish guerrillas Monday in a clash in eastern Turkey, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said. It said the clash with the guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) took place near Alacakaya town in Elazig province.

Iraq to reduce military service

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is reducing from three to two years the period of compulsory military service for university graduates, Iraqi newspapers reported. The government's Al Jumhoriyah newspaper said the amendments included cutting the period of national service for graduates. It also said Baghdad would raise from 18 to 19 the age at which non-students would be pressed into service.

Bonn denies German parts in Iraqi Scuds

BONN (R) — None of the Scud missiles fired by Iraq during the Gulf war contained parts made by German firms, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday. He was responding to reports from the United States, quoting a U.N. study, that German firms had provided equipment for Baghdad's missile programme.

Bilaterals resume today; Arabs confident of tackling substance despite Israeli stalling tactics

Washington session could continue beyond Friday

From Jordan Times Staff Reporters in Washington

ARAB-ISRAELI bilateral talks resume here today after a delay of one week marked by heated wrangling and bickering over procedural issues and whether the negotiations will deal with substance at this time around.

Having failed to show up for the American-scheduled Dec. 4 talks, the Israeli delegations have finally arrived and said they are ready to start talks Tuesday.

The Israelis, however, have indicated that they would insist on talking procedure before substance and that they would not stay in the U.S. capital beyond Friday.

According to some reports the Israeli delegations, which arrived here Sunday, contend that they are only assigned a limited mandate to reach agreement with the Arabs on another venue for bilateral talks and they would leave by Friday regardless of progress

or lack of it in the talks.

Arab delegates nevertheless sound optimistic yesterday that the Israeli delegation will in fact enter negotiations on substantive issues, including steps towards Palestinian self-rule and will remain in Washington at least until some real progress is made.

Other than bickering over whether the negotiations should continue to be based in the U.S. capital, the Israelis are making a big issue of the two separate rooms that the State Department has made available for Jordan-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli talks.

According to Israeli-sourced reports, the Israelis have told U.S. officials that the "separate-rooms" arrangement is unacceptable and that negotiations would not get off the ground unless the second room is closed.

By doing this, the Israelis meant to send the message that they would talk to the Palestinians only under Jordanian auspices — a condition rejected by both the Jordanian and Palestinian sides.

According to Arab delegates, "a principle has been adopted that

separation has to be established because the two teams have separate identities and agendas."

"It is not a matter of tactics," a well-informed Arab delegate told the Jordan Times. "This is a matter of principle. The Jordanians will not negotiate the Palestinian agenda on their behalf. They have to be separated when negotiating with the Israelis."

"The problem is not the number of rooms," another Jordanian delegate explained. "The Jordanians provided an umbrella to the Palestinian delegation to facilitate their participation in a conference aimed at finding a solution to their problem. The umbrella was not provided so that we would negotiate on their behalf."

"When it comes to the actual conduct of negotiations the two (Palestinian and Jordanian) teams have separate agendas which they have to negotiate separately," the delegate said.

The new stage began when the advance teams of Arab delegations went to the State Department just before the Dec. 4 date for bilateral talks to inspect the rooms designated for the bilateral talks and found that

there were only three rooms for the Syrians, Lebanese and the joint delegation.

"We then made the request that the joint delegation be separated into two rooms during the negotiations and the Americans accepted," an Arab delegate recounted.

In the negotiations with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker prior to the opening of peace talks in Madrid, it was agreed, according to informed sources, that the joint delegation would commence its bilateral talks as a joint delegation but would later split into two separate negotiating teams.

"We considered the first bilateral meeting in Madrid with the Israelis as the one which we would attend jointly," a Jordanian delegate said.

"Now we expect that substantive negotiations should be conducted with two separate delegations as agreed upon with the co-sponsors before we entered the peace talks," he added.

After the Americans complied with the Arab request, the delegations entered the State Department from

(Continued on page 5)

Nothing less than freeze in settlement will be a breakthrough — Sharif

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The bottom line that Jordan would consider as a tangible breakthrough in Arab-Israeli peace talks is a freeze in Israel's settlement activity in the occupied territories, Information Minister Mahmoud Sharif said Monday.

"If the Israelis are serious for peace, then they can show it by a freeze of (Jewish) settlement (in the occupied territories)," said Mr. Sharif in an informal meeting with foreign journalists.

Asked whether the demand for a halt to Israel's settlement activity was a "condition" to pursue peace talks with the Jewish state, the minister said: "It is not a condition. It is only common sense."

Mr. Sharif pointed out that the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were "an important element in the continuation of the peace process" since land for peace is the basis for the peace negotiations.

"They are swallowing (Arab) land day by day and this is not acceptable," he told the journalists in the first such encounter after he assumed office two months ago. "Quite soon there will not be any land to talk about. No land (means) no peace."

Israel has rebuffed every call for a halt to its dedicated drive to settle the occupied territories as a gesture of goodwill against the backdrop of the peace process, which was launched in Madrid with a U.S.-Soviet sponsored

peace conference Oct. 30.

The Palestinians, who are attending peace talks with Israel in a joint delegation with Jordan, have repeatedly affirmed that one of their first priorities is to ensure a freeze in settlements in the occupied territories.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said last month after talks in Washington that the issue of settlements could be on the negotiating table, but he ruled out any move to halt settlement activities in the occupied territories.

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Mahmoud Sharif

set by the U.S. and the Soviet Union and managed to delay the talks until Tuesday.

The U.S. obviously anxious not to antagonise its long-time Middle East ally, played down the dispute and was seen as not only letting Israel have its way but also going out of its way to appease the Jewish state and dilute adverse media impact against it.

Mr. Sharif said Jordan's strained relations with some of the Arab countries in the wake of the 1991 Iraq invasion of Kuwait were on the mend.

"There is a certain improvement in our relations with Egypt," a leader of the anti-Iraq Arab camp which Jordan did not join, Mr. Sharif said, recalling that His Majesty King Hussein and Hosni Mubarak had exchanged messages through envoys who visited Cairo and Amman in the last 15 days. "Further steps are needed" for a total reconciliation, but

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But Mr. Shamir reiterated his

Shamir maintains tough line

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Monday Israel may negotiate some issues directly with Palestinians in the next round of Middle East peace talks but opposed any move to split the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

"There has to be a dialogue on it. They have to submit grounds. Maybe they will persuade us," he said when asked if there was a possibility the Israelis would negotiate with Palestinians outside the framework of the joint delegation.

In the past Mr. Shamir has insisted on the joint delegation in order to avoid granting Palestinians the status of an independent entity.

The prime minister, speaking to reporters after addressing parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee, indicated that any direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations might come at the subcommittee level.

"At the previous meeting in Madrid it was stated there would be subcommittees in the negotiations ... so we have to discuss their composition," Mr. Shamir said.

But Mr. Shamir reiterated his

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. media refocusing limelight on Mideast talks

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

WASHINGTON — On the eve of the resumption of Arab-Israeli bilateral negotiations Tuesday, the U.S. media appear to be reviving interest in the issue of Middle peace after relegating it last week to the third or fourth item on television broadcasts and to the inside pages of newspapers.

"Conspiracy theorists" argue that there was a premeditated and carefully-orchestrated campaign by the U.S. media and administration to downplay the event to spare Israel the embarrassment of being absent on the scheduled opening day of the second round of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks after the Arab delegations showed up on the scheduled date.

Defenders of the media coverage say that this argument is "ridiculous" and that the peace talks were overshadowed by more important domestic stories.

Not one major newspaper in the country gave the story a front-page slot and only one of the major television networks featured the story in its nightly news programme. Even CNN, which brought the Gulf war and the Madrid peace conference to the

influence dominates the media,

and pro-Israeli apologists saying Americans were simply not interested.

The talks, which were officially scheduled to begin Dec. 4 in the American capital, but were delayed by Israel, barely received any front-page coverage in major newspapers or television news on the three major television networks.

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attention of the world, has said a

Only Jews and Arabs interested in bilaterals

By Ruben Castaneda

Euler Santos' shoe-shine customers aren't talking about it. Neither are the folks who come in for haircuts at the Early Bird Barber Shop on Ninth Street NW. It's not on the conversation menu at Joe & Mo's restaurant. Nay a woorf has been heard about it from the patrons — human or canine — of the Dog Wash in the Blagden Alley neighbourhood in Northwest.

The second round of the historic Mideast peace conference, which began at the State Department Wednesday minus, at least, until Monday, the Israeli contingent, has been greeted by much of Washington with a less than historic response.

Though interest in the talks is high among many in the local Jewish and Arab communities, the high-stakes peace process began in Madrid in late October has barely registered a blip on the radar screen of many Washingtonians.

Santos works a shoe-shine stand in the National Capital YMCA at the 17th Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW. Most of his customers are downtown professionals. Many chat with him about politics, such as the political odyssey of former Klausman David Duke, crime and the fortunes of the Redskins, Santos said.

No one, however, has said a

word about the peace talks. Santos said.

Like several of the nearly 20 people interviewed, Santos admitted that he was only vaguely aware of the talks and didn't know they were being held in Washington.

At the Early Bird Barber Shop in the Shaw neighbourhood, the talk lately has been about "drugs," "the Man," and (the property) of high-speed police chases," said barber George Mitchell. And, of course, the Redskins, Mitchell said. "That's all they talk about, those damn Redskins."

Acknowledging how much she knew about the peace talks, Lynda Wright, owner of the Dog Wash, said, "I haven't paid much attention. I know they were supposed to start, and Israel will not be there at the start." None of her customers — the dog owners, that is — and none of her friends have talked about the issue either. Wright said.

There was a little more excitement — at least for one evening — over at the Grand Hotel, the base for the Palestinian delegation. Wednesday night, a dozen members of the Jewish Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Peace welcomed members of the delegation — including Eliel Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem — to the peace talks.

"It has been a long period of

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)

Iraqi national airline to fly again

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Monday it would resume internal flights of its grounded national airline next month for the first time since the Gulf war. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Baghdad had received approval for the flights from the U.N. Security Council Committee that oversees sweeping trade sanctions imposed on Iraq for its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. INA quoted Iraqi Airways' Director-General Nouraddin Al Safi as saying flights would resume on Jan. 15 between Baghdad and the Iraqi city of Basra, 600 kilometres south of the capital, using planes already in Iraq. Mr. Safi did not mention flights to the northern city of Mosul, the other domestic route for Iraqi Airways Boeing 707s. Baghdad has appealed repeatedly for the sanctions committee to allow flights of 35 of its aircraft stranded abroad since they were flown out of the country for sanctuary just hours before the Gulf war began last February 17. The Security Council's Sanctions Committee recently approved a humanitarian flight by the airline to carry meat from Sudan to Baghdad. Mr. Safi said a government-owned company had been awarded a contract to repair the domestic Al Muthana airport, which was heavily damaged in the war.

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

OIC summit opens in Dakar

King addresses Islamic meeting today

DAKAR (Agencies) — Officials from 45 Muslim countries opened a summit

2 Middle East News

Iran said working to free German hostages

TEHRAN (R) — Iran is working hard for the release of two kidnapped German aid workers, the last Western hostages held in Lebanon, the Tehran Times said Monday.

The paper, frequently well-informed on Westerners held by pro-Iranian militants, said "fresh developments" could result from an Iranian minister's visit to Bonn in the coming days.

A Muslim leader in Lebanon said Sunday the German captives, Thomas Kempner and Heinrich Struebig, would be freed by the end of the month under a deal involving two Lebanese brothers jailed in Germany.

But Bonn denied any deal to free Abbas and Mohammad Ali Hamadi, jailed for murder, kidnapping and hijacking.

The Tehran daily, accurate in the past on hostage issues, said Iran's ambassador in Germany, Hossein Mousavian, had returned to Tehran and met President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani over "new initiatives for the release of the German hostages."

It did not spell out the initiative, but added: "The official but not pre-planned trip to Germany of Deputy Foreign Minister Malmoud Vaezi within the coming days seems to open up brighter prospects."

"Thus the coming days could possibly bring in news of fresh developments in this connection."

Since August, nine Western captives have been freed in a push by the United Nations to free all hostages in Lebanon in return for Arab prisoners held by Israel.

Keen to end its international

Iraq settles in for winter of sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — A defiant Iraq is settling in for a winter of United Nations sanctions, certain that time will erode international will behind the crippling trade ban.

Baghdad, expecting sanctions to be extended after a periodic review this week and rejecting a U.N. oil-sale plan to fund food imports, is trying to dampen its people's hopes the embargo imposed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will be eased.

"I had a dream that the sanctions will be lifted. I think it will be very soon," said 70-year-old Suleiman, whose two-year-old grandson goes without milk under the embargo.

The price of eggs in Baghdad's well-stocked if costly markets fell by 25 per cent last week on rumours the Security Council would lift the sweeping sanctions gripping Iraq's poor.

Prices have gone back up again but Iraqis cling to the belief that the world will not continue sanctions while Iraqi children were dying of hunger and disease.

"We have been trying to prepare the people for the last few days. We do not want them to be surprised," an Iraqi official said in explaining recent government statements that it expected no favours from the Security Council.

U.N. officials have complained that Baghdad is not fully cooperating with its ceasefire mandate to find and destroy weapons facilities. The government's part in unrest is the Kurdish north also continues to worry the West.

Irqi officials and ordinary citizens appear convinced that U.S. President George Bush, a driving force behind the U.N. embargo, will be out of the White House before President Saddam's government loses its grip on power.

Iraq has rejected a U.N. plan

to sell oil under supervision to raise money for food and medicine, saying the scheme would strip Baghdad of its sovereignty and leave it with only enough money for a few months of supplies.

"We would rather die than those lose our dignity," said Mrs. Suleiman, sitting outside U.N. headquarters. She said her two-year-old grandson was drinking water because only children under one were eligible for government rations of baby milk.

Powdered milk on the open market, the only reliable source, now costs between 75 and 80 dinars for five kilogrammes, half a month's wages for many Iraqis.

The price translates to up to \$8 at black market rates which have made a mockery of the official rate, which makes a dinar worth more than \$3.

The Security Council bans Iraqi exports and allows the import of humanitarian supplies but Baghdad says the money it needs to pay for food and medicine is frozen in bank accounts around the world.

Britain last month agreed to release \$125 million in Iraqi funds after Baghdad freed businessman Isha Richter, jailed in 1986 for alleged bribery. Diplomats said Sweden has agreed to unfreeze assets to buy medicine but has not yet done so.

"The situation on the nutritional side and the health side is sliding downwards," said one Baghdad-based diplomat.

Diplomats said popular support for the government would remain so long as it continued a ration programme that provides about one third of people's basic needs.

"The rationing is absolutely essential and the government is working extremely hard to keep it," one diplomat said.

Baker: U.S. 'might well' have let Israel-Iran deal

WASHINGTON (R) — Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday that the United States "might very well" have allowed Israel to sell Iran American-made arms and spare parts worth billions of dollars from early 1981.

Asked to comment on a New York Times report that Washington abruptly changed its policy to make the sales possible, Mr. Baker said on U.S. television:

"I don't know, that it's not true. I don't know that it is true... I don't have any recollection... it might very well have happened as far as I know."

The New York Times report, quoting senior Reagan administration officials and Israeli officials, said the flow of arms began a few months after Iran released the American hostages seized at the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979.

The hostages were freed on January 1981 on the day President Ronald Reagan took office. Mr. Baker was White House chief of staff at the time.

The secretary of state, pressed to confirm the report, said: "It might very well be the case that we had decided to do that as a favour to Israel, because Israel would earn, I suppose, some money from selling those parts."

"We do cooperate with Israel on matters such as this."

Asked how it was that he was not sure whether it happened, he said: "A lot of things happened over that four-year period, some of which I knew about and some of which I didn't. I don't have a recollection."

"The secretary of state is the person, as I understand it, who is empowered to approve export of technology such as that... that doesn't mean it would necessarily have come to the president's attention but it might very well have," he added.

The secretary of state at the time was Alexander Haig.

The New York Times quoted an adviser to Mr. Haig as denying the former secretary of state authorised arms shipments from Iran in the 1980s, a U.S. embassy official said.

The newspaper said the United States specifically authorised the sales for between six and 18 months.

Iran badly needed the arms,

ammunition and spare parts to replenish and repair the predominantly U.S.-made arsenal it was using in its war with Iraq.

The newspaper said that Mr. Haig and former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin worked out the agreement in 1981 and the Reagan administration rescinded it in 1982.

In the mid-1980s the Reagan administration made a secret agreement with Iran to exchange U.S. arms for American hostages held by the Iranian groups in Lebanon.

The New York Times said it could not establish an American rationale for the change of policy. But it said disclosure of the Reagan administration's agreement with Israel comes as the U.S. Congress prepares to begin an investigation into allegations that Reagan campaign officials made a deal with Iran for the release of the hostages after the November 1980 U.S. presidential election.

The United States and Soviet Union are joint sponsors of the talks, due to resume in Washington Tuesday.

"We know that this Zionist enemy has allies and friends in Washington and he is the spoiled son of the subsequent American governments... and more than that (America) is not the decent referee in this difficult and dangerous match," Mr. Arafat said.

He accused Washington of siding

Arafat accuses Soviets, U.S. of favouring Israel

NICOSIA (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has Sunday accused Moscow of backing Israel in Middle East peace talks but singled out Washington as the main culprit.

In a message marking the fourth anniversary of the start of the Palestinian uprising, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman called on Palestinians to escalate their struggle.

"We know that the co-sponsors of the (Middle East peace) conference are pampering the Zionist enemy, especially America which treats him as an ally and a friend," he said.

The United States and Soviet Union are joint sponsors of the talks, due to resume in Washington Tuesday.

"We know that this Zionist enemy has allies and friends in Washington and he is the spoiled son of the subsequent American governments... and more than that (America) is not the decent referee in this difficult and dangerous match," Mr. Arafat said.

He urged Washington and Moscow to shoulder their responsibilities and stop applying double standards.

"What is going on now in Washington puts the United States before an important test to prove its credibility," he said.

"We once again assert in this political round of the settlement process in Washington that there will be no peace other than the Palestinians', no stability without the Palestinian will, and no security unless it passes through the security of our people and the Arab Nation," he said.

We went to Washington realising the difficult situation and we did not go for a picnic... but we went to stress our position towards peace and justice even though we might not find this peace or this justice," he said.

He accused Washington of siding

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1991

Islamic summit opens in Dakar

(Continued from page 1) at this critical stage in the history of Arabs, Muslims and the entire world.

King Hussein and Mr. Benyamin affirmed that holding the summit in Senegal gives a chance for building and bolstering cooperation among Arab states in the Arab World and Africa.

The two leaders exchanged views on the Middle East peace process and the need to solve the Palestinian problem on the basis of international legitimacy.

Discussed at the meeting was also the democratisation process in Jordan and Algeria. King Hussein and Mr. Benyamin affirmed the need to continue the process and safeguard it so as to engage the Jordanian and the Algerian peoples in the process of decision-making in their countries.

They also called for meeting the fences between Arab states, especially

at a time when blocs in other parts of the world are being created.

The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Sharif Zaid, Mr. Abu Odeh and Prince Talal. On the Algerian side it was attended by Foreign Minister Al Ahmar Al-Hamdi.

Following the meeting King Hus-

sein said in a statement:

"It is a big Arab and Islamic meeting and it was our duty to attend it. I cannot predict the results but I hope it will carry positive results on the long way towards the goal and purposes in achieving international legitimacy."

King Hussein will deliver a speech at the conference Tuesday morning. The address will deal with Arab and Islamic issues as well as the basis for consolidating Islamic unity.

Nothing less than settlement freeze

(Continued from page 1)

view that he was confident that Syria would attend the multilateral talks, scheduled to be held in Moscow Jan. 28-29, despite its declared stand that it would be futile to join such negotiations unless progress was achieved in the peace process.

The philosophy that Jordan applies in relations with other Arab countries, Mr. Sharif said, is that "we are facing challenges that can be dealt with on a national level" but on an Arab-Arab level which requires intense inter-Arab consultations and coordination.

"We are pushing in these circumstances," added Mr. Sharif, who is also handling the foreign affairs portfolio in the absence of Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, who is in Dakar attending the Islamic summit.

Mr. Sharif, who quit as chief editor of Jordan's Al-Dustour Arabic-language daily in October before becoming minister of information, described Wednesday's meeting with the journalists as aimed at familiarising himself with the foreign press corps in the Kingdom.

U.S. media refocusing limelight

(Continued from page 1)

the reins of intricate diplomacy to his sides.

If President Bush or Secretary Baker made statements about Israel's absence, then definitely there would have been more coverage by the U.S. media," one veteran Arab journalist said. "It is the case of the chicken and egg in the case of the administration and the media concerning who makes the news," he added.

"But could you imagine if Syria had not shown on Dec. 4 and Israel did... the media would have had a field day," the journalist said.

American journalists defending their coverage of the event say that although interest in the talks is high among many in the Arab and Jewish communities, most average Americans are preoccupied with the faltering economy and the other kind of issues that "sell newspapers."

"Many Americans are focusing their attention on the economy and the peace talks were simply overtaken by events," said Boston Globe State Department correspondent Mary Currie. "The talks really did not begin... when they do next week and there is substance there will be more coverage," added Ms. Currie, who covered and was based in the Middle East for several years.

Supporting the argument that Americans are not interested in the process, a Washington Post reporter, based on 20 interviews with Washingtonians, said most were vaguely aware of what they were being held in the U.S. capital.

Many Arab delegates and journalists contend that the media, which has many Israeli supporters in its ranks, poorly relegated the event to save Israel from what promised to be a public relations nightmare if television cameras had been allowed to show the empty chairs of Israeli delegates at the negotiating table.

The U.S. government, they say, also played a role in down-playing the story by making only mild statements after Tel Aviv clearly snubbed the administration leading to elections. Mr. Najibullah said Kabul would not seek fresh sources of weapons. "The task is to reduce the arms in the country and not seek ways of bringing in new supplies," he said. He denied reports of heavy fighting between rival pro-government militia groups in the western Afghan city of Herat in the past week. Witnesses from the area had said militia groups fired at each other from tanks and armoured vehicles and regular army troops had also clashed with the militia groups. Mr. Najibullah said the reports were "totally wrong" and offered to take foreign reporters to Herat Monday.

U.S. paratroops, Kuwaitis exercise

KUWAIT (R) — Hundreds of U.S. paratroopers staged an assault training exercise with Kuwait Sunday, over nine months since Gulf allied troops ousted Iraqis from the emirate. At least one U.S. ranger was injured on the first day of the manoeuvres which were almost cancelled because of strong winds. The Pentagon has said the five-day war games, the second joint training manoeuvres in Kuwait in a month, will include some 900 U.S. army, marine, navy and air force personnel. High winds marked the first day involving seven C-141 planes carrying 550 U.S. airborne ranger light infantry soldiers. Details of the ranger's injuries were not immediately known, said U.S. Captain Douglas Wisnioski from the special operations command central. Two ambulances were seen heading towards landing areas.

Afghan leader vows not to seek more arms

KABUL (R) — Afghan President Najibullah said Sunday he would not seek weapons from other sources to fight Western-backed guerrillas after Moscow cut off supplies next month. He told a news conference that foreign interference in the country must cease and he renewed his call for a ceasefire to help to end the 13-year-old Afghan civil war. "Once these two conditions are fulfilled, Afghans can come to a speedy resolution of all their differences," he said. The United States and the Soviet Union are due to halt weapons supplies to the warring sides by Jan. 1 to promote a U.N. peace plan providing for a ceasefire and a transitional government leading to elections. Mr. Najibullah said Kabul would not seek fresh sources of weapons. "The task is to reduce the arms in the country and not seek ways of bringing in new supplies," he said. He denied reports of heavy fighting between rival pro-government militia groups in the western Afghan city of Herat in the past week. Witnesses from the area had said militia groups fired at each other from tanks and armoured vehicles and regular army troops had also clashed with the militia groups. Mr. Najibullah said the reports were "totally wrong" and offered to take foreign reporters to Herat Monday.

The U.S. government, they say, also played a role in down-playing the story by making only mild statements after Tel Aviv clearly snubbed the administration leading to elections. Mr. Najibullah said Kabul would not seek fresh sources of weapons. "The task is to reduce the arms in the country and not seek ways of bringing in new supplies," he said. He denied reports of heavy fighting between rival pro-government militia groups in the western Afghan city of Herat in the past week. Witnesses from the area had said militia groups fired at each other from tanks and armoured vehicles and regular army troops had also clashed with the militia groups. Mr. Najibullah said the reports were "totally wrong" and offered to take foreign reporters to Herat Monday.

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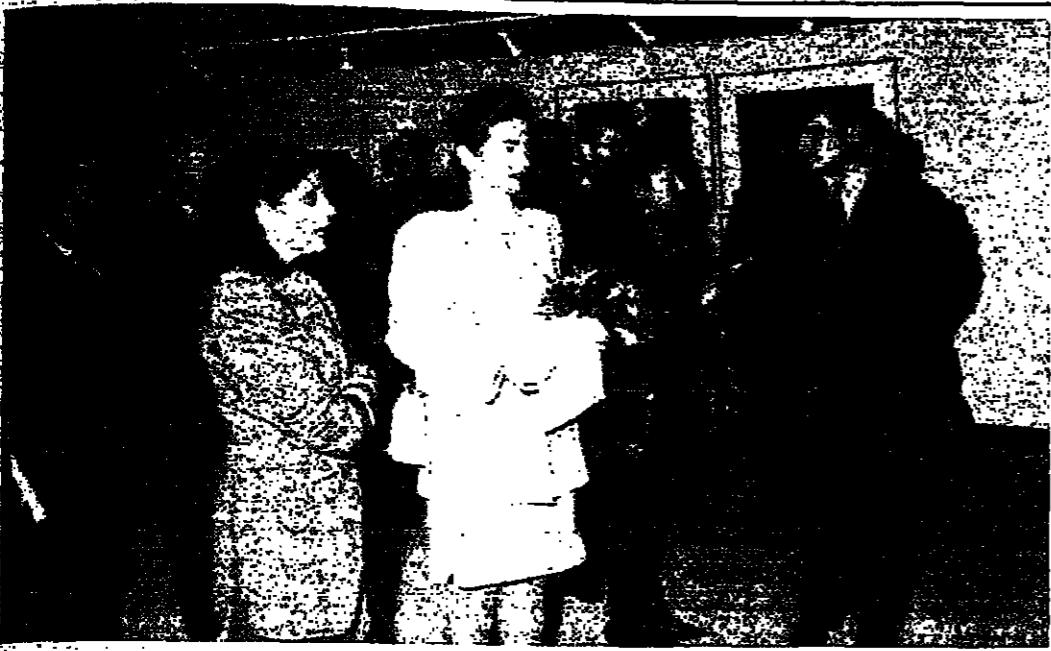
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ART EXHIBITION — His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and Princess Ghada Talal paid a visit to the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation (AHSF) and were briefed on the functions of its various units including the information centre, the

public library, the children's library and the computer library. The Prince and Princess had earlier opened at the AHSF's scientific and cultural centre an exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Jumana Al Huseini.

Camp refugees doubt Israeli peace intentions, back intifada

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As the eyes of the world focus on Tuesday's Arab-Israeli talks in Washington, many Palestinians in refugee camps in Jordan were Monday quietly, if not somberly celebrating the fourth anniversary of the "intifada" with scepticism over the possible fate of the Middle East peace process and whether it would produce an equitable solution.

There was a general consensus among those interviewed by the Jordan Times on the eve of the intifada's fourth anniversary that the Israeli "wrangle" over the date of the second round of talks has reemphasized an Israeli hard-line position rejecting any withdrawal from Arab territories thus they felt the situation necessitated the continuation of the intifada as a form of armed struggle and/or rejection by the people living under occupation.

Furthermore, many of those interviewed felt that the Israeli absence and the Arab delegation's sterile wait in Washington, "continued" Israeli hardline statements' vowed never to return Arab land, the continued building of settlements, the week-long imposed curfew in most Palestinian cities, and the meek American response to Israeli intransigence have all added up to the feeling of scepticism and doubt hanging over the peace talks and said

"How can you talk about a peace process when the Palestinians are not even allowed to have their own independent delegation and when we, Arabs, have to do things according to Israeli conditions?" asked Abdul Latif Abdullah, a merchant in Baqaa. "The Israelis don't even acknowledge that there is a Palestinian problem, so we have to find new ways to deal with an enemy that doesn't acknowledge our right to exist," he added.

A taxi driver from the same refugee camp, Najeh Al Ayedi, said he believed that the ongoing peace efforts were fruitless because of Israeli stubbornness and rigid stand. "Israel will not give up Arab land easily and that is why I believe the intifada should continue until there is a final and honourable solution to the Palestinian problem," he said.

A 28-year-old school teacher, Mahmoud Ahamed, reiterated the sense of mistrust and doubt looming over the peace talks and said

that the intifada should not stop until "every inch of Arab land is returned."

"I am 100 per cent sure that the talks in Washington are not going to work," he told the Jordan Times. "Israel is not to be trusted because it might fall under international pressure now and show some concessions, but it will repeat its brutal occupation double fold in years to come," he added.

Explaining that the massive Soviet Jewish immigration was the most frightening aspect of future policymaking.

"My expectations are bleak," Mr. Adham said. "Israel's ambitious designs are much greater than we expect and they include the whole Arab World and not only the land of Palestine."

Another 18-year-old student, Eyad Rajeh, did not show as much pessimism over the outcome of the peace talks, maintained that the intifada was a "people's decision" not a "one man's decision."

"I don't think the intifada would continue if there was peace and Arab lands were returned," he said. "But it's hard to imagine peace by listening to Israel's hardline rhetoric."

Abu Kamal, an owner of a hardware store in Baqaa took the argument a step forward saying: "If there was real peace — something everyone wanted to see in this region — and rights were recognised, then the intifada would have served its purpose."

Consultants begin examining Jordan's educational system

AMMAN (J.T.) — A team of British consultants working for the British Overseas Development Agency arrived in Amman Monday for a 20-day visit during which its members will examine the ongoing programme for overhauling the educational system in Jordan.

The process, which is in implementation of resolutions passed

by the 1987 educational conference in Jordan involves training of teachers, introducing new curricula for schools and textbooks, evaluating school buildings and educational facilities.

The British consultants will be meeting with the director general of the Ministry of Education's Educational Centre, the director of technical education, super-

visor of schools and educationists to discuss a training programme for teachers.

Ministry of Education officials said that the group would be talking to teachers and instructors at a number of teacher training centres and would be examining new teaching methods followed by teachers undergoing training under the ministry's programme of upgrading qualifications of school teachers and teaching proficiency.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and Jordanian universities, is undertaking a programme for upgrading the standard of teachers in Jordan through three training centres in Amman, Irbid and Karak.

Teachers are being trained to improve their skills and exposed to new methods for teaching at schools as adopted by the 1987 conference with a view to raising the educational standards in the Kingdom.

The seminar, which ends on Wednesday, will mean combatting agricultural pests which affect vegetables protected under plastic sheets. The paper also outlined the role FAO could play in helping to implement national programme in this concern.

The paper recommended boosting the work of agricultural extension services, emphasised the need for agricultural quarantine and stressed the importance of testing all imported seeds. It further encouraged information

SSC opens symposium tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) will organise a symposium Wednesday for its liaison officers on the implementation of the social security laws. The symposium aims to acquaint the participants with the law, define their duties and familiarise them with the legal, financial and administrative aspects of the law.

Iranian parliamentary team meets Arabyat, presents Tehran views on Mideast peace moves

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing the Iranian Shura Council (national assembly) arrived in Amman Monday on a visit and to hold talks with members of the Lower House of Parliament on issues of mutual concern to Jordan and Iran.

The delegation handed a message to Lower House of Parliament speaker Abdul Latif Arabyat containing the resolutions of an international conference held in Tehran in October to voice support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israel.

The conference, attended by Palestinian groups among other delegations from 60 countries, had rejected the American-brokered Middle East conference and called for armed struggle against Israel.

The message, addressed to Dr. Arabyat by Mahdi Karoubi, the Shura Council's speaker, was delivered by the delegation members who extended an invitation to Dr. Arabyat to visit Tehran.

Dr. Arabyat said the Islamic nation was in dire need for solidarity and close cooperation at this crucial stage to counter threats from enemies of the Islamic nation.

At the meeting, attended by House members, Dr. Arabyat briefed the visitors on Jordan's endeavours to support the Palestinian people at all levels.

Dr. Arabyat thanked the delegation for the message and promised that it will be examined

by the Lower House members. The head of the Iranian delegation called for increased cooperation among Islamic countries in all fields particularly under the present difficult circumstances facing the Islamic nation.

He said the visit aimed at promoting Jordanian-Iranian cultural, economic, commercial and political cooperation and to sound out Jordan's views with regard to the Tehran conference resolutions.

The Tehran conference called on Islamic and Arab countries to reject all conciliatory efforts which, it said, could lead to formal recognition of Israel.

The Iranian delegation's two-day visit covers talks with Jordanian officials and tours of archaeological and religious sites in the Kingdom.

In a late development, members of the Iranian delegation were also received by Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Izzedin Al Khathib who briefed them on Jordan's efforts exerted to prevent attempts by Israel to Judaize the holy places in Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank.

He said in the meeting, which was attended by Dr. Arabyat, that Jordanian-Palestinian relations were distinguished.

"Since the start of the intifada, His Majesty King Hussein issued his directives to the ministry to allocate monthly salaries to the families of martyrs killed in the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation," he said.

Ministry prepares rural and municipal reforms

IRBID (Petra) — Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Minister Abdul Razzak Tubeishah affirmed Monday that the ministry is currently working on implementing His Majesty King Hussein's directives calling for supporting local municipal councils and developing their work through updating legislation and laws.

In a meeting with administrative governors and heads of municipal and rural councils in Irbid governorate, Dr. Tubeishah said the ministry has started preparing draft laws and was studying proposals in this regard. The draft laws and proposals would be discussed at a general conference which would be attended by heads of municipal and rural councils for approval, he said.

He called for revising the role of the joint councils and for activating them.

He said the ministry intended to develop the efficiency of technical, administrative and financial cadres at the local councils through holding courses and specialised seminars.

The ministry, he continued, was currently studying the issue of reducing interest rates of the Cities and Villages Development Bank and was trying to find new financial resources for the bank to enable it to contribute to supporting the councils' projects.

The minister announced at the meeting that the ministry would distribute JD 1.5 million to the municipalities to help them pay back their debts.

The minister called for cooperation between the councils to be able to reach the agreed goals.

"With such cooperation a lot will be achieved for the local councils," he said.

Dr. Tubeishah said the ministry had prepared a complete study on problems facing the municipal and rural councils and had referred

to the Council of Ministers. The study, he said, included recommendations on ways to remove obstacles facing the councils and solve their problems.

He affirmed the importance of updating laws and called for increasing allocations for the council.

Seminar on communication techniques ends Thursday

AMMAN (J.T.) — A two-week seminar on new communication services sponsored by the French Embassy in Jordan is drawing to a close this week. A total of 19 participants from the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), Jordan Television (JTV) and Yemen, Syria and Lebanon are taking part in the seminar organised in cooperation with the TCC training centre in Amman.

The seminar, which ends Thursday, entailed discussions and training session related to new aspects of television broadcasting and the latest developments in new data communication services for the business sector as well as for the public users within the country and in relation with international networks.

A spokesman for the French Embassy said that the participants exchanged expertise and advanced ideas aimed at promoting telecommunication services for the business sector as well as for the public users within the country and in relation with international networks.

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Teachers are being trained to improve their skills and exposed to new methods for teaching at schools as adopted by the 1987 conference with a view to raising the educational standards in the Kingdom.

The seminar is also discussing topics related to growing produce in hot houses, production of seeds used in the Near East region, crop diseases, combating pests and other related matters.

Delegates from 24 nations in the Near East region are taking part in the five-day conference, which opened in Amman Sunday.

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جريدة عربية مستقلة تصدر باللغة الإنجليزية

الرئيسي للجنة التحرير: محمود العبيدي

المدير العام: محمد العبيدي

الرئيس المسؤول: جورج سعيد

المسؤول عن التحرير والادارة: جورج سعيد

العنوان: شارع الملك عبد الله الثاني، عمّان، الأردن

النوع: يومي

الطبعة: 100,000

العدد: 100,000

الطبعة: 100,000

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Le livre de notes — a message of love and peace

By Nelly Lema

AMMAN — "Le livre de notes," a cultural bouquet of poetry, music and songs, will be performed at the Royal Cultural Centre on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1991. It features with multi-national cultures and exotic aromas from around the globe... both pleasing and sad, pleasing and hopeful... to deliver a message of goodwill, a message of peace and love, tolerance among the nations.

And for such an event, five ladies with as varied a background as possible meet on the common ground of breaking the barriers of racism, war, intolerance, to reach an understanding among all men by tapping the spiritual in them... the fibre of their hearts!"

In this performance, Mona Latif Ghaffas, Egyptian by birth and creed, a poet and producer now living in Montreal, Canada, circumambulates the world. In small, erratic passages of poetry, she travels from country to country, from one civilisation to another and walks among the different people.

She is accompanied by songs and music from around the world. She depicts a variety of local scenes wherever she goes, sweeping through Germanic palaces, the coffee fields of Brazil, the African jungle, and on to Armenia, Moscow, Spain, France, Italy, Japan, Palestine and the Americanians.

She floats around the pages of time, assuming the music and colour of the era, recreating atmospheres and places, from ancient Greece and the gods of Olympus to dancing queens in Germanic palaces, and from there moves on to the songs of pain and death of Armenian folks. Gently, she evokes the pain and fight for survival of the many peoples of the world. And gently she ends with a note of love and tolerance.

Her tender voice engulfs you in a blanket of warmth and emotion that transcends time and place. It reaches the depth of one's being. The variety of nations and nationalities fades beneath the singleness of man's universal nature.

Mona Latif Ghaffas has experienced, firsthand, the rejection that emigrating races face on arrival to the new land: the loneliness, the lack of acceptance, the racism.

Arabs confident of tackling substance

(Continued from page 1)

three separate entrances to the negotiating rooms but separated inside into four rooms.

"We went through the procedure as we envisioned it. A member of the Jordanian delegation sat with the Palestinians in their room, and a delegate from the Palestinians sat with us," a Jordanian delegate told the Jordan Times.

Initial agreements between the Palestinians and Jordanians on the separation of delegations included an arrangement by which one Jordanian would sit in with Palestinian negotiators and vice-versa so that coordination would be maintained at all times.

Yet Jordanians and Palestinian delegates have also indicated that that percentage is not exclusively binding and that it could change according to the subject of negotiations and its applicability to the interests of one side or another.

Although everything seemed in order on Dec. 4, the Israelis had not yet arrived in town and the rooms had not been inspected by their advance team and the arrangements, although agreed upon with the Americans, were not yet finalised with the Israelis.

On Sunday, the Israeli advance team, on an inspection tour of the rooms, noticed the extra room for the Palestinians and immediately objected to the separation between Palestinians and Jordanians and demanded that they meet with Israeli negotiators as a joint delegation in one room.

Members of the Jordanian delegation see this latest move by the Israelis as a new "delaying tactic" and yet another effort to "strip the talks of substance," but they are confident that the Israeli-created obstacles can be overcome.

Contacts to solve the problem of "separation" before the talks resume tomorrow have not succeeded, and the two sides are expected to tackle it early on tomorrow. "Eventually," an observer close to both Arabs and Israelis agreed, "it will be up to the Americans to decide, and the parties will have to go along."

In her briefing to the press yesterday, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said there would only be one room available for the joint delegation.

"As far as the terms of reference, that is a joint delegation and they would be coming here in a joint delegation, and whatever the parties meeting work out between themselves is entirely their business," Ms. Tutwiler told reporters.

"It is one room," she insisted. "We have not been asked to mediate on that issue," the spokeswoman said in the briefing, which was dominated by events in the Soviet Union. "We are aware of the parties' views on that issue. Everyone agreed on the terms of reference and the reference

she was brought up in the Franco-Arab culture of (predominantly) Egypt, daughter of an industrialist whose creativity and far-sightedness contributed to his great success. This did not diminish his spiritual and artistic gifts (he painted and sculpted) nor his nationalistic love for Egypt. Mona was privileged to have a sophisticated upbringing that had no room for prejudices. Her father was her ideal. As a child, she stood reciting in front of the mirror the national speeches that he prepared for his election to parliament.

In spite of her living among the advantaged and the diplomatic circle, Mona focused on and worked among the poor of Charabiya. She felt at home among all sorts of people and that was at the root of her belief in universality, in the inner man.

After the death of her father, she moved on into the world of writing and reciting as if to prolong the existence of that wonderful man.

Her book "Nicholas, fil du Nil" is an ode to her father, and to Egypt. "When I left Egypt, I carried within me the pain of parting with it."

"Les chants du karawan," her next book, dealt with all the suffering in the world. "The boat-peoples of Cambodia — from a thousand of them, only 10 arrived..." she explains "so I wrote the poem 'the red boats'."

The karawan is the oriental singing bird. To Mona, "the orient of the heart" is that innermost part of one's being that bears all that is noble within the human being. It is through that orientation that beings of different cultures meet and interact.

She speaks also of the Nubians, who had to depart from their lands as they were engulfed by the rising waters. "They waited to the last moment before quitting. When the boat people refused to take along the dog of an old man, he chose to remain there and face the deluge." Mona relates: "I made a boat trip over the sunken Nubia, saw its houses beneath the waters of the Nile. It disbelieved my innermost feelings and I expressed it in a collection of fragments of poetry 'Quarante voies pour un exil'."

"Le double compte de l'exil" is another book that deals with two cultures. A refugee arriving in Montreal is hidden by an American. They both have found

difficulty in being accepted, in integrating. It is on that ground that they meet. When he is found an exiled, she packs her bags and lives in an Indian reservation. She is a re-enactment of Mona herself who lived the rejection and racism in question.

Her book "Les voix du jour et de la nuit" is a trip into the heart of Egypt, memories of faces and events, or "Sit el ku" the symbol of Egypt.

And finally, "La triste beauté du monde" is an amassing of 10 years of poetry written as a reaction to current events. "The songs of fear and survival" followed the Gulf war and the bloody events of Peking. "The songs of love and melancholy" follow. "The songs of genesis and the future" are based on a reaction to sculptor and contemporary musicians.

In her writing, be it novels or poetry, one can feel a continuous sense of nostalgia, a sense of the lost homeland. "No country remains the same as time passes. So everyone loses the country of his childhood. One feels sad that his children cannot experience the charm of past moments," Mona explains.

In the stage performance, Mona recites her verses in French, while Natalie Choquette, a soprano coloratura, Elise Boucher, alto, and Sylvia Balassanian, pianist, perform relevant music and songs, wearing costumes designed by Anne Rossignol.

Natalie Choquette was born in Tokyo of Canadian parents. She made her musical studies in Moscow and then at the University of Montreal. Her voice has a texture that can touch deep into the heart.

Elise Boucher de Gonzalez was born in Quebec of American and French parents, their lineage goes back to Spain and Ireland; a family of musicians that enabled her to study quite early in her life, singing, piano playing and dance. She is a distinguished author-composer-performer. She had made many presentations for radio and television. She held workshops on the performing arts in France. She took part in a jazz vocal quartet among other vocal ensembles that she joined. She arranged the vocalisations for a trio of two voices and a harp. She sang as soloist in works for "symphony, choir and soloists" which she interpreted in Switzerland, France and Canada. It was fused internationally in all Francophone countries.

The warm texture of her voice and the accuracy of her tone allow her to manipulate and create a variety of musical atmos-

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Season's greetings - Management

Observations of a traveller in the U.S.

By Pascal B. Karmy

IN my previous article (Jordan Times, Oct. 14, 1991) general observations were made about some of the Arabs and Palestinian immigrants in the U.S. In addition, I have recorded in my diary some matters which normally draw the attention of a person who travels for the first time to the U.S., and particularly to California, which has the largest state population and is third largest in area in the U.S.

After visiting New York (Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building) we enjoyed staying in Staten Island which is a borough of New York, lying south-east of it. In Staten Island, with its streets lined on both sides with green trees and its relatively quiet sea shore, a person smells a purer air and enjoys a relaxing and quieter life than the hubub and pollution of New York streets.

In California, the first thing which draws one's attention is the fact that all houses are made of wood, both inside and outside. They are unlike the houses built in the suburbs of the European cities or in the countryside like, for instance, in Britain, France or Belgium. Moreover, the first (ground) floor of the houses is not protected at all by iron bars fixed on the windows or by shutters or the like; there are only wide and high sliding window panes. It is thus fairly easy indeed for a thief to break the window panes, get in and steal, as very often happens.

Together, the ladies form a wonderful team. The multiplicity of their backgrounds makes them open-minded and understanding. They see beauty in complexity and yet they seek that which is common to all men.

In the performance, Mona Latif Ghaffas' warm voice, her fluid text and the music interpretation, manage to smooth out discrepancies among the nations, discrepancies created by events, like the Gulf war, where poets were torn and could not form an opinion.

"We want to conquer war through music, poetry and art. We want to deliver a message of peace, love and tolerance."

Almost all the main cities and towns of California are of Spanish

origin (Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Diego, Santa Barbara). It may be remembered that California was a Spanish colony. In 1822 the inhabitants changed their allegiance from Spain to the New Mexican Congress. In 1846 the settlers revolted against Mexico and declared the independent Republic of California but a few months later and as a result of the Mexican-American War, California was occupied by the U.S. forces and later admitted to the Union.

that they are healed of their disease. What appears to be more ludicrous is the fact that the preacher tells the television viewers to put their hands on the television screen so that they will be healed of the diseases from which they suffer. Eventually the channel announces the telephone number of the preacher's church for the purpose of obtaining pamphlets or for contributing to it.

Honestly, preachers on the television often appear to be more like actors rather than Christian sedate preachers. Judaism or rather Zionism has deeply permeated through some U.S. Christian sects to the extent that very often their preachers sound to be delivering sermons on Judaism rather than on the true and pure Christian faith.

Another matter which attracts one's attention in southern California is the lack or non-accessibility of public transportation. If a person wants to go, for example, from Garden Grove to San Clemente or to Dina Point he can find no means of transportation to take him there. One has to have his own private car or to ask a friend or a relative to take him to his destination. That means old

people who have no private car or cannot drive one will have to stay at home all days. Taxis are of course available but they are expensive. By contrast, in Europe, in a given area, means of transport are more easily available or accessible. However, transportation between states is available either by train or by bus or by aeroplane.

Another observation is this. Salespeople in the shopping centres are very courteous, pleasant and patient with customers. Even more interesting is the fact that you can buy for example a suit or a tuxedo from a shopping centre and return it the following day or even after some weeks, although you may have used it in the meantime, provided of course you produce the relevant receipt. Many people take advantage of this practice and even abuse it sometimes. Consequently, some shopping centres announce in advance to the shoppers that no return of goods will be accepted.

Pascal B. Karmy was a lawyer in Palestine up to the end of the Mandate in 1948 and legal adviser in UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna.

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN THE ARAB POTASH COMPANY LIMITED DIKE RAISING CONTRACT NO. APC/43/91 ADVERTISEMENT FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

The Arab Potash Company Limited (APC) of Amman, Jordan intends to raise the dikes to compensate for the build-up of salt in the evaporation pans. The required works are located in the Potash Projects Area on the southern end of the Dead Sea, about 230 km north of the port of Aqaba and 200 km south of Amman. For this contract, only firms and joint ventures (consortia) who have been pre-qualified will be invited to tender. It is presently anticipated that Tender Documents will be issued to pre-qualified applicants in February 1992, and tenders will be submitted in April 1992. The work required under this contract is as follows:

CONTRACT APC/43/91 - DIKE RAISING

Raising 34 km of dike and canal embankments by about 2 metres, using 1.7 million cubic metres of zoned earth fill. Applicants wishing to be pre-qualified and invited to tender for this contract may collect the pre-qualification document, which contains further information, from the following:

Arab Potash Company

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Amman - Jordan

The closing date for receipt of completed pre-qualification documents is January 20, 1992.

A.Y. Ensour

Managing Director

The Arab Potash Co., Ltd.,

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Jordan Times

Sports

Europeans worry about soccer World Cup fixture schedule

NEW YORK (R) — European teams began planning their 1994 World Cup campaign Monday, many of them more worried about fitting games into their schedules than about the quality of their opponents.

Worse hit by Sunday's qualifying draw were third seeds Spain, who had the bad luck to land in the only seven-nation group, involving them in 12 games before the Nov. 17, 1993 deadline.

They have to meet Ireland, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Albania, Latvia and Lithuania twice each in their hunt for a top two group place to ensure their presence in the 1994 finals in the United States.

National trainer Vicente Meira was scratching his head sadly after the draw. "This seven-team group is going to be too long," he said.

"I can't see how we will be able to fit in all the matches. The Baltic countries can't play at all in the winter which makes it an even bigger problem."

Spain have a 10-team first division, giving them a crowded league season already.

With the entry of the three Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the admission of Israel into the European section and the World Cup debuts of the Faroe Islands and San Marino, Europe had a record 37 teams in the qualifiers.

As only 12 will reach the finals, the International Football Fed-

eration (FIFA) introduced six and seven team groups for the first time.

Second seeds England were another country not enamoured by the mammoth programme.

Manager Graham Taylor, whose side must play 10 matches against the Netherlands, Poland, Norway, Turkey and San Marino, said he did not know how the fixture list could be managed.

England have a 22-team first division involved in 42 matches as well as two major domestic cup competitions and the European Club Cups.

"We've studied the programme and we can only see nine possible dates to play our matches as it is," Taylor said. "And if we have a bad winter, we will have big problems."

"With bad weather for four or five weeks, we would find it impossible to finish the programme."

"It won't be good for the players if we arrange matches late into the summer as they won't get a break. We could arrive in the United States with them playing for 12 months continuously."

"They have the equivalent of an intense cup match every three days. And there is the problem of the release of players. Already managers and coaches are languishing at us when we ask for their players."

Faced with such a crowded schedule, many groups may well start playing their fixtures during the current season for the first

time. FIFA has said group matches can be played from March 1 though they may not be held in June during the European Championship finals in Sweden.

Most major nations were relieved not to have Spain's problem of playing 12 matches.

Italian Federation President Antonio Mattarrese said if Italy had been drawn in a seven-nation group they would have reduced the size of their domestic league from 18 to 16 teams to solve the fixture problem.

Italy play Scotland, Portugal, Switzerland, Malta and Estonia in group 1.

Not everybody was unhappy, however. French team boss Michel Platini, whose side is unbeaten in almost three years, was confident his team would come safely through a group also comprising Austria, Sweden, Bulgaria, Finland and Israel.

"There are much tougher groups than ours," he said. "Italy have a much harder group than we do and can't afford any mistakes."

England and Spain are in difficult groups as well. But I think we should get through without too many problems."

South American teams also have larger groups than usual with Brazil facing eight matches against Uruguay, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela.

The Brazilians, three times world champions and the only country never to have lost a

World Cup qualifier, have never before had to play more than six matches to reach the finals.

But they should not have too much difficulty finishing in the top two and reaching the finals.

Two nations not worrying about scheduling were world champions Germany and hosts the United States, who both receive automatic entries into the 24-team finals.

Cup holders Germany were Sunday made 11-2 favourites to win the 1994 World Cup following the qualifying draw in New York.

A London bookmaker rated Argentina and Brazil as 8-1 joint second favourites, with Italy 9-1, and England, France and the Netherlands at 14-1.

The Faroe Islands were quoted at 10,000-1 while rank outsiders were Sao Tome and Principe, tiny islands off the west coast of Africa, at 20,000-1.

FIFA Saturday barred Yugoslavia from playing international matches, including World Cup qualifiers, on home soil while its internal troubles continue.

FIFA's Executive Committee took the decision in New York on the eve of the draw for the qualifying rounds of the 1994 World Cup.

FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter said the European Football Union (UEFA) had already ruled out European club and national matches in Yugoslavia because of the civil war and that the world body would extend the ban.

The Faroe Islands were quoted at 10,000-1 while rank outsiders were Sao Tome and Principe, tiny islands off the west coast of Africa, at 20,000-1.

Mr. Dibajeh called on the Jordanian soccer fans to join the league at the airport "to welcome the heroes who added a new achievement to the records of the Jordanian sports activities."

Minister of Youth Saleh Isheidat late Sunday sent a cable to Al Ramtha sports delegation in Oman to congratulate them.

The minister wished the team more success in the future.

Al Ramtha reaches Asian quarterfinals

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Ramtha soccer team has reached the quarterfinals of the Asian Cup Winners' Cup Championship after it beat Oman's Zufar 1-0 in the first of their two matches, held in Irbid on Oct. 28.

Al Ramtha defeated Zufar 1-0 in the first of their two matches, held in Irbid on Oct. 28.

Al Ramtha's goal was scored by its striker Khalid Al Aqqouri in the 23rd minute of the match.

In the 42nd minute Ramtha's goalkeeper Ahmad Abu Nasouh managed to save Al Ramtha's goal from a penalty kick by Oman's striker Hilal Hamid.

Zulfar's Ahmad Thabet was more successful than his colleague Hamid when he scored his team's only goal in the 86th minute from a penalty kick.

Thereafter Al Ramtha continued the game with 10 players after Aqqouri was dismissed by the Saudi referee Abdullah Al Nassar. But the soccer remained unchanged and the match ended with a 1-1 tie, which was enough for Al Ramtha to qualify to the next round.

In the quarterfinals, Al Ramtha will meet Iranian team Malvan on Dec. 20 in Tehran and on Dec. 27 at home in Irbid. The exchange of the matches between Al Ramtha and Malvan will be the first of its kind at the level of local soccer teams.

Al Ramtha, which was the guest of honour Sunday evening in a dinner banquet hosted by the Jordanian community in Sulalat, will return Tuesday morning to Amman.

Al Ramtha city residents were preparing to give their team a jubilant welcome at the airport, the head of Al Ramtha Supporters League, Aloush Dibajeh, told Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday.

Mr. Dibajeh called on the Jordanian soccer fans to join the league at the airport "to welcome the heroes who added a new achievement to the records of the Jordanian sports activities."

Minister of Youth Saleh Isheidat late Sunday sent a cable to Al Ramtha sports delegation in Oman to congratulate them.

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JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1991

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY DECEMBER 10, 1991
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

that does not increase your assets is good so look at your property and see what will add to its value.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You want to reach out and gain the good will of friends and others who attract and appeal to you but it's necessary you do so by entertaining them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You like secret and mysterious and it's a fine day for unfolding some course of action that can bring you the good will of some very important person.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You now have it in your power to gain the advancement that means a great deal to you through good friends and through many social contacts.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Whatever you would like to do that does require you go straight to a bigwig is very good and you can make considerable progress in some civic venture.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Whatever you would like to do that does necessitate more open-mindedness on your part is just great now so look about you and see new persons.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) How you can attend to personal and other responsibilities can be the pattern under which you advance most surely and swiftly in the days ahead.

AC Milan is absent from Europe but remains team to beat at home

LONDON (R) — AC Milan's European rivals may be excused a few sighs of relief that the Italian giants are banned from continental club soccer competitions this season.

While Italian champions Sampdoria, who play Panathinaikos of Greece in a Group A European Cup tie Wednesday, continue to under-perform at home, Milan are walking tall.

Banned for one season by UEFA for leaving the pitch before the end of their European Cup quarterfinal in Marseille last season, Milan have only domestic glory to play for.

"Milan were extraordinary — very, very good," said club President Silvio Berlusconi Sunday after they outplayed UEFA Cup hopefuls Torino 2-0 at home. "Until (Ruud) Gullit's opening goal, I saw the best soccer I've seen all season."

"We've got to accept the difference between us and Milan," Torino's Belgian midfielder Enzo Scifo said later.

Scifo must now try and raise morale ahead of Wednesday's UEFA Cup tie in Turin against AEK Athens of Greece.

Potential European opponents must also be glad of Juventus's rare failure to qualify for Europe this season.

The second-placed Turin team, one point behind Milan, beat Internazionale 2-1 in a match that sacked him last season but his team lost 4-1.

"We made complete fools of ourselves," Toshack said.

Read Madrid now have 25 points out of 26 this season as they head for their UEFA tie against Neuchatel Xamax of Switzerland in Madrid Thursday.

The former Real Madrid coach took Real Sociedad to the club that sacked him last season but his team lost 4-1.

"We made complete fools of ourselves," Toshack said.

Read Madrid now have 25 points out of 26 this season as they head for their UEFA tie against Neuchatel Xamax of Switzerland in Madrid Thursday.

The tie is in Hungary due to war in Yugoslavia.

Anderlecht, who were held to a 0-0 draw at home by Panathinaikos in their first semifinal match last month, beat Ghent 3-1 Friday but will be without Belgian international midfielder Marc Degryse, who has a thigh injury.

While Trapattoni was celebrating the defeat of his old team, there was no such joy for John Toshack in Spain.

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Flu makes Becker doubtful for Grand Slam cup

ANTWERP, Belgium (R) — Boris Becker, struck down by a fever, is doubtful for next week's Grand Slam Cup after pulling out of the final of the European Community Tennis Championships.

The German was due to play American Aaron Krickstein, but failed to appear. "I am sick. I have the flu and I have fever," Becker said at his hotel in Antwerp.

Asked whether he was going to play in next week's \$6 million Grand Slam Cup, the world number three said: "At the moment I couldn't play. I'm going to wait two days and see. If it's like now, I have no chance to play."

He was due to leave for Munich later Sunday to see his own doctors and "maybe get some help."

Becker's withdrawal gave Krickstein, a wildcard entry, his first tournament victory in two years.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HIRSCH
©1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

DECLARER'S SIGNALS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

North
♦ Q J 9 6
♥ 9 6 3
♦ K J 7 5
♣ 4 3 8

WEST
♦ 7 5 3 2
♥ K 10 4
♦ 8 2
♣ K 7 5 4

EAST
♦ A K 10
♥ A 2
♦ 4 3
♣ Q 10 9 3 2

The bidding:
1 NT Pass
2 NT Pass
3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four ♦

There's hardly a bridge player who doesn't know how the defender can signal encouragement or disapproval of partner's lead—a high card says, "I like it," a low card suggests casting around for more fertile fields. What is not as well known is that declarer can disrupt the opponents' attempt to communicate with each other in exactly the same fashion with carefully selected falsecard "signals."

Suppose, for example, declarer is trying to discourage the defenders from continuing a suit. The way to do that is by playing the lowest card

held. Conversely, to try to tempt a defender into persevering with the suit led,

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 6/12/1991	Tokyo Close Date: 9/12/1991
Sterling Pound*	1.8165	1.8075
Deutsche Mark	1.5665	1.5740
Swiss Franc	1.3845	1.3893
French Franc	5.3575	5.3795 **
Japanese Yen	127.90	128.18
European Currency Unit	1.2955	1.2890 **

* USD Per STG

** European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Interest Rate					
Currency	1 MTHS	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS	Date: 9/12/1991
U.S. Dollar	4.87	4.50	4.43	4.56	
Sterling Pound	10.56	10.56	10.56	10.50	
Deutsche Mark	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.37	
Swiss Franc	8.00	7.93	7.87	7.75	
French Franc	9.93	9.87	9.81	9.68	
Japanese Yen	6.31	6.03	5.81	5.59	
European Currency Unit	10.56	10.45	10.37	10.31	

Interest rate for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Previous Month Date: 9/12/1991

Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm* Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm

Gold 368.85 6.90 Silver 4.06 0.088

* 24 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 9/12/1991

Currency Bid Offer

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6780	0.6800
Sterling Pound	1.2251	1.2312
Deutsche Mark	0.4307	0.4329
Swiss Franc	0.4885	0.4909
French Franc	1.1259	1.1265
Japanese Yen*	0.5291	0.5317
Dutch Guilder	0.3818	0.3837
Swedish Krona	0.1175	0.1181
Italian Lira*	0.0568	0.0571
Belgian Franc	0.0203	0.0209

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 9/12/1991

Currency Bid Offer

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7690	1.777
Lebanese Lira*	0.0769	0.0775
Saudi Riyal	0.1805	0.1815
Kuwaiti Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	0.1837	0.1846
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2170
Omani Riyal	1.7350	1.7440
UAE Dirham	0.1837	0.1846
Greek Drachma*	0.3740	0.3800
Cypriot Pound	1.4980	1.5150

* Per 100

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market:

Index	8/12/1991 Close	7/12/1991 Close
All-Share	121.50	126.82
Banking Sector	105.74	105.42
Insurance Sector	127.29	126.75
Industry Sector	159.57	158.47
Services Sector	144.86	143.15

Summer 31, 1990 - 1991

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.8065/75	U.S. dollars	Canadian dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1360/65	Deutschmarks	Dutch guilders
	1.5740/50	Swiss francs	Belgian francs
	1.7735/45	French francs	Italian lire
	1.3890/95	Japanese yen	Swedish crowns
32.40/44	5.3800/50	Norwegian crowns	Danish crowns
1191/1192	128.10/20	U.S. dollars	
5.7660/7710	6.2020/70		
6.1215/65	6.1215/65		
One ounce of gold	370.00/50		

U.S. dollars

Concord Cinema Tel: 677420

Dolph Lundgren
DARK ANGEL

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Nabil Al Mashini Theatre Tel: 675571

The theatre will be closed from Dec. 9, 1991 to Jan. 2, 1992. Shows of
"SOMERSAULT TIME"

will resume Thursday, Jan. 2, 1992.

Iraq said repairing oil export terminal in northern Gulf

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq, still unable to export oil because of a world trade ban imposed over its invasion of Kuwait last year, is repairing a war-damaged terminal in the northern Gulf, an oil industry newsletter reports.

Iraq's Oil Minister Usama Al Hiti said in Cairo Sunday his country could have the capacity at this stage as the U.N. had to load over half a million barrels per day (b/d) of oil from its Mina Al Bakr terminal.

The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported Iraq plans to get two of the terminal's four berths into working order and establish 300,000 b/d of export capacity within the next two months, rising to 700,000 b/d in four months.

"MEES learns from reliable sources that the Iraqis are using the oil tanker Kirkuk as a base for a repair team working on the Mina Al Bakr terminal, the tanker being moored close to the terminal itself," the oil industry newsletter said.

Iraq had refused to accept the terms of a U.N. plan for limited crude oil exports to pay for the imports of essential commodities, claiming it was restrictive.

The deep-water Mina Al Bakr terminal, which had a 1.6 million b/d capacity when it was constructed in late 1970s, sustained damage during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and had been repaired to handle 800,000 b/d before Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Court orders freeze on Kevin Maxwell assets

LONDON (R) — A court ordered a worldwide freeze on the personal assets of the late Robert Maxwell's son Kevin Monday at the request of accountants seeking money missing from pension funds in the dead tycoon's media empire.

Kevin Maxwell and his brother Ian were also ordered to surrender their passports while they provide any information they can to help trace pension fund assets.

"We have obtained orders on behalf of the provisional liquidators, some against Kevin and some against Ian," said a spokesman for the provisional liquidator.

"Those against Kevin are more stringent because it appears he is the one most closely involved in running Bishopsgate," he added.

Accountants have subsequently estimated that assets worth more than \$700 million are missing from pension funds of Maxwell's Mirror Group Newspapers and his Maxwell Communication Corporation.

Investigators speculate that he siphoned off the pension money to prop up his crumbling empire

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks closed lower in the thinnest estimated volume this year. Arbitrage selling eroded prices. Concern over events in the Soviet Union helped push investors to the sidelines. The Nikkei average finished down 92.18 points to 22,352.88.

FRANKFURT — German shares ended a lethargic session little changed. The 30-share DAX index edged 0.87 point higher to 1,559.05.

PARIS — A cloud of winter depression brought another lower close to a morose Paris Bourse. Few buyers were in evidence and operators focused on negative factors which were already largely known. The CAC-40 index shed 22.35 points to 1,663.37.

LONDON — Shares closed higher as a late FISE futures rally helped the market shrug off economic and political worries. The 100-share Financial Times Stock Exchange index finished up 20.9 points at 2,409.6.

NEW YORK — U.S. blue-chip stocks were firm at midday, trading in a tight range on moderate volume. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 1.79 points at 2,888.19.

PHILADELPHIA Cinema Tel: 634144

Stripped To Kill

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Rainbow Cinema Tel: 625155

NEW KIDS

Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Gulf Arab economist criticises economic achievements of GCC

KUWAIT (R) — A Gulf economist criticised the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Sunday, saying it had achieved minimum possible cooperation between member states.

He called on the alliance to draw up a model of planned economic integration which would achieve a common market and diversify sources of income. He also said it should consider bringing Yemen into its fold.

Dr. Abbas Al Mijren, a Kuwaiti economic academic, said the GCC's efforts to diversify economies from dependence on one source of income, oil, had been "very poor results after all these decades."

He accused the organisation, which will hold a summit on Dec. 23 in Kuwait, of concentrating on political matters, giving secondary importance to economic issues.

"The political and security aim

of the GCC has ranked number one since it was formed and until this moment," Dr. Mijren told the second day of a three-day seminar on future economic cooperation and security in the GCC.

He said the

"Moving it (Yemen) to the GCC would be a daring step to transfer the organisation from a Gulf cooperation to an Arabian Peninsula council. It will add power to the GCC rather than point out.

Abdullah Al Majid, a Saudi Arabian industrialist, said GCC

Arabian states needed to integrate their economies but had to overcome fears that unified economic policies would affect competition in domestic markets.

Varying tariffs on imports between GCC countries made it difficult to draw up a uniform tariff policy. Some GCC projects aimed at foreign markets instead of the regional one, loosening the aim of a common market.

He also said GCC foreign labour preferences put restraints on manpower mobility.

"We now hold the chance to solve our chronic problems which include food self-sufficiency, economic and military security and that by extending cooperation bridges with Yemen," he said.

"In my opinion,

"Moving it (Yemen) to the GCC would be a daring step to transfer the organisation from a Gulf cooperation to an Arabian Peninsula council. It will add power to the GCC rather than point out.

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Slavic leaders: USSR has ceased to exist Yeltsin, Gorbachev hold crucial meeting on political future

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin met Monday in the Kremlin with Mikhail Gorbachev to brief him on the new Slavic Commonwealth and said there might be a role it for the Soviet president.

Republic leaders rushed to Moscow Monday to assess the country's balance of power the morning after announcement of the new "commonwealth of independent states" that appeared to take most of them by surprise.

The agreement said Minsk, in Byelorussia, would become the new capital of the commonwealth, replacing Moscow.

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who attended the meeting, said he believed Mr. Gorbachev "still has not exhausted his opportunities" as a leader. He said Mr. Yeltsin agreed to let republics' legislatures consider the commonwealth plan "in parallel" with Mr. Gorbachev's union treaty, apparently as a compromise to Mr. Nazarbayev and Mr. Gorbachev.

The flurry of activity in the Kremlin followed Sunday's declaration by Yeltsin, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and Byelorussian leader Stanislav

Shushkevich that the Soviet Union has "ceased to exist" politically and that they were creating a new "commonwealth" open to all former republics.

Mr. Nazarbayev, whose resource-rich republic is a powerful pillar of the current union, was briefed along with Mr. Gorbachev by Mr. Yeltsin four minutes about the commonwealth.

The commonwealth pact makes no mention of any role for the beleaguered Gorbachev, possibly putting the final nail in the coffin of his once-omnipotent Kremlin government and his proposed union treaty to rebind the country as a loose confederation of sovereign states.

Mr. Nazarbayev emphasised that whatever structure emerged, the leaders must be careful not to ignite civil unrest and added that they agreed on the need for radical reforms to forestall economic collapse.

"We shouldn't use pressure tactics or blackmail. We should stop frightening people that civil war and bloodshed will begin," Mr. Nazarbayev said.

Both Mr. Nazarbayev and Mr. Gorbachev spokesman Andrei Grachev said Gorbachev might continue to have a role to play in

Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to keep centralised control over the nuclear weapons on their territory and ensure their safe dismantling. The four are home to most of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine comprise nearly three-fourths of the Soviet Union's nearly 290 million people and possess most of its economic strength. They make up the country's traditional Slavic heartland.

The Kazakh leader ruled out for now any union by the five predominantly Muslim Soviet republics to counterbalance the powerful Slavic Commonwealth, saying he believed a "union of sovereign states" as proposed by Mr. Gorbachev might still be possible.

But Mr. Nazarbayev emphasised: "I am a pragmatist and a realist, and I will look at the situation." It was a clear indication that he too may withdraw his support for the union treaty and deprive Mr. Gorbachev's of his last powerful ally.

Both Mr. Nazarbayev and Mr. Gorbachev spokesman Andrei Grachev said Gorbachev might continue to have a role to play in

any future alliance. Mr. Grachev told Soviet journalists that Mr. Yeltsin raised the possibility of "having the post of president" among the commonwealth's leaders.

Mr. Nazarbayev said that at this difficult moment, Gorbachev still has not exhausted his opportunities. That's my personal opinion.

Mr. Nazarbayev said he found out about the agreement by telephone from Mr. Yeltsin only upon arriving at Moscow's VIP airport late Sunday. Mr. Gorbachev had no advance knowledge, either, and was not even informed until after Yeltsin telephoned President George Bush Sunday.

The White House had no immediate comment about the matter.

The presidents of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan briefly attended the meeting with Mr. Gorbachev, according to the Soviet News Agency, (TASS). But a full meeting of the State Council, the body temporarily running the Soviet government, was canceled without explanation.

Ukraine seeks nuclear arms abolition

LONDON (R) — Ukraine wants to form a collective security group with other nuclear republics from the disintegrating Soviet Union and eliminate all nuclear weapons, a Ukrainian official said Sunday.

Vladimir Grinov, deputy chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, said in an interview that Ukraine might propose that "what's called the Soviet Union now" should get rid of all nuclear weapons in five or six years.

About 20 per cent of the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons are located in Ukraine, he said.

Leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia said Sunday they were creating a commonwealth of independent states and Mr. Grinov noted that Kazakhstan also had nuclear weapons.

"Ukraine is going to propose to the three members that a decision should be made on how long the presently-called Soviet Union should be a nuclear power," Mr. Grinov said through an interpreter.

"We will also appeal to the rest of the world to set up a special foundation to abolish and liquidate nuclear weapons in the world."

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk has said Ukraine, with a population of more than 50 million, has no nuclear power ambitions and has assured NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner of this.

Mr. Grinov was visiting Britain at the head of a high-powered delegation, the first from Ukraine since the republic voted a week ago for independence from Moscow.

The delegation of government officials, bankers and businessmen aims to establish trading, commercial and banking links.

Marcos pleads not guilty to tax evasion charges

MANILA (R) — Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos, brimming with confidence, pleaded not guilty Monday to tax evasion, saying government prosecutors were "wasting their time."

With a shake of her head each time, she pleaded "not guilty" to each of seven tax evasion charges read out by a clerk in the court-house packed with reporters and lawyers.

Asked after the 30-minute arraignment if she was afraid of going to jail, Mrs. Marcos told reporters: "There is no place in the Philippines that will jail for me."

"I am not afraid. I believe in divine justice," the once-powerful widow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos said.

Mrs. Marcos is being tried before Judge Tomas Tadeo along with her only son, Ferdinand Jr., who is charged with two counts of tax evasion. He pleaded not guilty.

She is charged with failing to pay income and estate taxes of 5.7 billion pesos (\$205 million) and her son with evading taxes of 17,004 pesos (\$630).

Chief Prosecutor Aurelio Trampos said he would ask for the maximum five years jail for each of the seven charges against Mrs. Marcos.

Judge Tadeo set the next hearing for Dec. 16, but her lawyer said Mrs. Marcos would waive her right to attend.

She faces, theoretically, more than 400 years in jail if convicted on all 80 criminal and civil counts filed against her by President Corazon Aquino's government.

Dressed in white with a red and blue scarf and clutching a rosary, she was mobbed by dozens of supporters outside the court-house in the Manila suburb of Quezon City.

"Imelda, Imelda," they chanted, and occasionally "Imelda for president," as placards proclaimed "Imelda, woman of dignity, not guilty."

The 62-year-old widow returned to the Philippines on Nov. 4 after nearly six years exile in the United States.

She and her husband were ousted in a popular revolt in 1986, accused of stealing of billions dollars from the heavily-indebted country they ruled for 20 years.

China, India set to thaw relations after 30 years

PEKING (R) — Relations between China and India, icy since a border war nearly 30 years ago, look set to thaw with a fence-mending visit by Chinese Premier Li Peng to New Delhi this week.

Mr. Li will be the first Chinese prime minister to visit India since Chou Enlai in 1960.

Mr. Li's five-day visit starts Wednesday and could lead to the reopening of major consulates and resumption of border trade.

Border trade between the world's two most populous countries was suspended and consulates closed when the border war erupted in 1962.

Peking's ambassador to India, Cheng Ruisheng, expressed delight Saturday that the giant neighbours shared the common view that economic development was the top priority for developing nations, and human rights followed.

China has been sharply criticised for human rights abuses after its 1989 military crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. It is also worried about alleged Chinese sales of short-range missiles to India's old adversary Pakistan.

Smith defence witness says he heard no screams

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida (R) — William Kennedy Smith's lawyers resume questioning Monday of a family friend who has already said he heard no sounds of struggle on the night Mr. Smith is accused of raping a 30-year-old woman.

After laying the groundwork for their case with forensic experts over the weekend, Mr. Smith's defence team put Stephen Barry on the stand for the final few moments of a rare Sunday afternoon trial session.

Mr. Barry, whom the jury is likely to regard as a credible witness because he is an assistant district attorney in New York, resumes giving evidence as the trial enters its second week.

He has already testified that he heard no screams in his second-story bedroom at the Kennedy compound at Palm Beach when he was a guest at the Easter weekend.

The alleged victim, whose name has not been released, said she screamed while trying to fight off Mr. Smith, 31, when he raped her in the early hours of March 30. The defence says they had agreed to have sex after they met in a Palm Beach bar.

For seven straight days jurors

have heard dramatic testimony including evidence from the sobbing woman and Mr. Smith's uncle, Senator Edward Kennedy.

They have also heard more mundane statements from expert witnesses called by lawyers for both sides who have discussed everything from the strength of the alleged victim's bra fabric to the acoustic properties of the Kennedy home.

During the week, the prosecution wrapped up its case, and Mr. Smith's attorneys called five scientific experts to testify, paying a total of \$22,000 for their services.

But criminal lawyers say scientific and forensic testimony about grains of sand or scraps of grass will be less important to the jurors than the accounts of the people involved — especially as much of the forensic testimony so far has been inconclusive, with each side presenting its own interpretation.

"Members of the jury tend to rely more on visceral witnesses than on scientific experts when deciding guilt or innocence in a case," commented Lawyer F. Lee Bailey. Stephen Barry was such a witness.

Moldova elects president amid ethnic strife

MOSCOW (R) — Mircea Snegur has been elected president of the Republic of Moldova by more than 98 per cent of voters after an election marred by ethnic strife.

In the run-up to polling Mr. Snegur, who ran unopposed for the presidency, had accused Soviet military units of occupying several areas of the republic and of distributing weapons to Russian extremists. The Soviet Armed Forces denied the charge.

Figures from the republic's election commission, quoted by the independent news agency Interfax Monday, gave Mr. Snegur 98.2 per cent of the vote in Sunday's poll. Turnout, despite boycotts by ethnic Russians and Turkic Gagauz, was put at 82 per cent.

Mr. Snegur's government, which proclaimed the southwestern republic's independence last August, has promised to move decisively to overhaul the economy, strengthen worker discipline and tackle vexing ethnic strife.

But scattered violence at the weekend, including armed blockades by minority Russians of some polling stations, underscored the difficulties ahead for the tiny republic, where many tie their future to that of neighbouring Romania.

Moldova, which has a population of 4.3 million, is mostly made up of Romanian lands incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

Last May the two sides held working-level talks at which they made headway in discussing the border dispute.

India is concerned about the flow of Chinese arms into neighbouring Burma, whose military government New Delhi opposes. It is also worried about alleged Chinese sales of short-range missiles to India's old adversary Pakistan.

Smith defence witness says he heard no screams

BANGKOK (R) — Amnesty International says it has the names of 200 people arbitrarily arrested by Burma's junta in the first seven months of this year as part of a concerted campaign to destroy opposition.

The London-based human rights group said it had a list of 1,500 people arrested for political reasons since the junta seized power in 1988.

"The organisation believes this may be only a proportion of the total number of political prisoners detained," Amnesty said in a report released Tuesday.

The Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded in Oslo Tuesday to Burma's most prominent political detainee, Aung San Suu Kyi. The husband and sons of the detained opposition leader will accept it on her behalf.

Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since July 1989 for outspoken attacks on her rule.

Her National League for Democracy (NLD) went on to win the May 1990 general election by a landslide but the generals have refused to hand over power and arrested most of the rest of its leaders.

In Oslo, 9 former Nobel Peace Prize winners called Monday for world economic sanctions against Burma's military rulers to force them to switch to democracy and release Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi.

"Burma today is a totalitarian state. The military rules by force and terror. Not even a semblance

Vance leaves Yugoslavia saying no peace force until ceasefire

BELGRADE (R) — United Nations envoy Cyrus Vance left Yugoslavia, Monday after a week-long visit in which he decided no peacekeeping force could be sent to the country for the time being because of continued fighting in Croatia.

Airport sources said Mr. Vance flew out before dawn. He was heading for New York to present his findings to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The U.N. chief in turn must make his recommendations on a peace force to the Security Council.

But even before leaving Belgrade, Mr. Vance said a peace force could not be contemplated while the warring sides continued to break the latest ceasefire.

"The terms of the Geneva agreement have not been fully implemented so far, so deployment of a peacekeeping operation cannot be envisaged," he told reporters Sunday.

The Geneva pact brokered by Mr. Vance two weeks ago between breakaway Croatia, Serbia and the Yugoslav Federal Army called for a solid ceasefire and the lifting of the Croatian blockade of federal army barracks in the republic.

But the fighting in Croatia, pitting the republic's forces against the army and Serbian rebels, continued throughout Mr. Vance's visit. Each side accused the other of violating the ceasefire.

Heavy fighting was reported Sunday around the town of Lipik, Novska and Nova Gradiste, east of the Croatian capital Zagreb, and the frontline east Croatian town of Osijek came under renewed bombardment.

Mr. Vance has cited the failure of Croatian forces to stop blocking army barracks despite agreement to do so in a string of ceasefire accords as one reason for the continued fighting.

He said he had basically agreed with all the warring sides on a plan for deploying peacekeepers to make a ceasefire could be made to stick.

But, reflecting obstacles this plan could face, the assembly of the self-styled Serbian autonomous province of Krajina in western Croatia ruled Sunday that peacekeepers could not be made to stick.

Diplomats said continued Serbian resistance to the EC blueprint for a new Yugoslavia would encourage more EC states to line up behind Bonn.

Actress wins Tibet's first beauty pageant

There were no immediate reports of fresh fighting Monday.

Mr. Vance, a former U.S. Secretary of State, said he would make a fresh appeal for complete observance of the ceasefire. "The shooting and the shelling and the killing must stop," he said.

He came to Yugoslavia to assess prospects of sending in a U.N. force following the Geneva accord, the 14th truce since the Croat declared independence and its Serb population re-belled.

The Serbs and the army hold most of Croatia's Serb-populated territory.

A European Community peace conference, grouping leaders of the six Yugoslav republics under the chairmanship of Britain's Lord Carrington, resumes in the Hague Monday but officials said Mr. Vance would not attend.

A diplomat said little of substance was expected to come out of the talks, officially described as an informal stock-taking exercise.

Serbia, the only republic formally to have rejected the EC's plan to transform Yugoslavia into a loose free trade association, once again appeared to hold the key to progress at the negotiations.

A ruling Saturday by the conference's Arbitration Commission that the federal state of Yugoslavia was legally "in the process of dissolution" puts fresh pressure on Serbia, which is fighting to preserve the food.

EC foreign ministers meet on Dec. 16 to consider whether to recognise Croatia and Slovenia, which also declared independence in June.

Germany has promised to recognise the two before Christmas and is urging its EC partners to follow suit.

Diplomats said continued Serbian resistance to the EC blueprint for a new Yugoslavia would encourage more EC states to line up behind Bonn.

New technique may discover hidden breast cancer

CHICAGO (R) — A new magnetic resonance imaging technique that scans the breast but blocks out fatty tissue that often hides tumours can pin-point cancerous lesions that standard mammograms may miss, scientists said Monday.

"Sanctions on trade with, and investment in, Burma should be imposed," the prize winners said, accusing the Burmese government of massive human rights abuses including torture, violence and the drug trade and letting juveniles be sold into prostitution.

Their appeal also called for a ban on arms sales to Burma and a halt to all economic assistance programmes. Sanctions should be imposed until power was transferred to democratically elected representatives.

The laureates were later due to hand a letter congratulating Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, 46, to her British husband and their two sons when they arrived for Tuesday's award ceremony.

The statement charged that the country's leadership was involved in the opium trade and that it "countenances the sale into forced prostitution in Thailand of tens of thousands of Burmese juveniles, may be 12 years of age and under."